

Keeping your baby healthy

Checkups are important even if your baby is healthy. The doctor or nurse will check your baby's growth and development and answer any questions you have. Bring his Lifetime Immunization Record card and Childhood Health Record booklet with you to every checkup. If your baby has missed any vaccine doses, catch up now. Being fully immunized helps prevent serious diseases, like pertussis, measles, and flu. These and other diseases that vaccines prevent can lead to pneumonia, brain damage, and death in children. Even diseases that are rare in the US are just a plane ride away! Be sure you and your baby's other caregivers are up-to-date on immunizations. This protects him, too.

Keep your baby's first teeth healthy

Your baby's first teeth are very important for eating and speaking well. They hold the space for permanent teeth, which helps prevent crooked teeth.

- No matter how your baby is fed, clean her teeth and gums every night before bed. Use a moist cloth or a small, soft toothbrush to wipe teeth.
- Lift your baby's lip once a month to look carefully at her teeth. If you notice white or brown spots, or that her gums are bleeding, visit her dentist or doctor.
- Formula and milk that stay in your baby's mouth while she is sleeping can cause cavities. If she falls asleep while breastfeeding, remove your nipple from her mouth.
- Avoid sharing your toothbrush, eating utensils, and cups with your baby. Germs that cause tooth decay can be easily spread from your mouth to hers.

Babies do not need juice

Juice is not recommended for babies under one year

old. Juice can make your baby less hungry for the healthy foods he needs to eat. It can also be bad for the new teeth that are forming. Juice does not take the place of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Eat together as a family

Your baby learns about eating by watching you eat. Talk with your baby about the new foods she is tasting, smelling, and touching. Small pieces of food that are easy to pick up and soft enough to squish between her fingers are fun for her to touch and taste. Offer her small pieces of whole grain dry cereal, soft fruit and cooked pasta, vegetables, and meat.

Even if your baby has some teeth, she is not old enough to eat hard foods. She can choke on foods like grapes or slices of hot dog. Cut food into bite-sized pieces. Stay near your baby and watch her while she is eating.

If you are breastfeeding, keep at it! The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children breastfeed for **at least** the first year of life, and for as long as mom and baby choose to continue.

Switch from a bottle to a cup

By age one, your baby should be drinking from a cup at meals and snack times. Keep the following in mind when choosing a cup:

- Choose a cup **without** a "no-spill valve." The only way your child can get liquid out of many no spill cups is to suck. This prevents your child from learning to sip.
- A snap-on or screw-on lid can reduce spills and still allows your child to sip.
- A cup with two handles makes it easier for your child to hold the cup.
- A cup with a weighted base prevents the cup from tipping over.
- Offer only water unless it is mealtime.



Family Health Hotline
1.800.322.2588
711 (TTY relay)

Programs of WithinReach

www.ParentHelp123.org

•Immunization information •Child care referral agencies •Affordable health insurance •Food and nutrition assistance •Prenatal resources •Family planning services •Local health clinics •Free screenings for developmental concerns •Breastfeeding information and support

Call the Family Health Hotline with questions about your Child Profile mailings.

Keeping Your Baby Healthy and Safe

Your baby's relationships are important

Your baby's brain is developing constantly so every moment is important. Your baby's relationships with you and others who take care of him are very important to his health and development. The everyday things that you and your baby's caregivers do all during the day help your baby learn and his brain develop.



- Talk to him and tell him what will happen next as you do things like change his diapers, feed him, and bathe him.
- Cuddle with him while you talk to him about pictures in his books.
- Play copycat games. Make a funny sound and then wait for him to make it. Copy his sounds, too.

Your baby may start to be most comfortable around people he spends the most time with and be more anxious around strangers. Remind everyone who takes care of your baby how important they are to him.

Your baby's development

Remember that each baby develops at his or her own pace. If your baby was born early, it may take a while for her development to catch up to full-term babies. You know your baby best. However, if your baby is not sitting up or making babbling sounds yet, be sure to talk with your doctor or nurse or call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 for the name of a Family Resources Coordinator (FRC) in your area. An FRC will talk with you about your concerns and help you find local services to check your baby's development.

Talk with your doctor about antibiotics

When your baby gets sick, it is common to want to give her medicine to help her feel better. However, do not expect your doctor to always give her antibiotics. Antibiotics do not kill viruses, which are often the cause of colds.

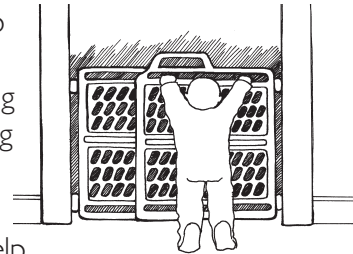
Watch your baby in the bath

A baby can drown quickly and quietly in only a few inches of water! Stay with your baby the entire time he is in the tub. **Do not leave the room**, for even a second, to answer the door or telephone. Even if he sits up well or uses a bath seat, do not leave him alone or with an older child.

Prevent young climbers from falling

A fall can cause cuts, broken teeth and bones, or a head injury. Here are some ways to help prevent falls:

- Move chairs that might tip over so that your child can't climb on them.
- Move furniture away from windows. Do not put your baby's crib near a window.
- Remember that window screens will NOT stop your child from falling from a window. Install window guards with a quick release mechanism.
- Check the side rails of your baby's crib. If they are not high enough, lower the mattress.
- Keep gates closed at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Use safety straps on changing tables, strollers, and shopping carts to help prevent baby from falling.



Following these suggestions can help keep your baby safe, but as he grows and moves around more, the best way to keep him safe is to stay close.

Keep your baby's car seat rear-facing

Your baby should ride in a rear-facing car seat until she is 2 years of age or until she reaches the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat's manufacturer. A rear-facing seat gives your child the best protection because it cradles her body better than a forward-facing seat. This helps spread the force caused by a crash more evenly across your child's entire body and reduces the risk of a neck injury.

Search "car seats" at
www.healthychildren.org for more information.

Dangers of air bags to babies and children

Air bags can seriously injure or kill a baby or child in the front seat, even in a minor crash. Some vehicles, like pick-up trucks and sports cars, have air bags but no backseat. These vehicles often have an air bag on/off switch. Unfortunately, even if the air bag is turned off, the air bag may still open in a crash. **Always** check with your vehicle manufacturer before putting a car seat on the front seat of any vehicle. Washington law requires all children to ride in the back seat until age thirteen, when possible.

Questions about airbags?
Visit www.safercar.gov for more information.